

VIRTUAL COUPONING™ METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR USE WITH  
CONSUMER KIOSK

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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5 A method and apparatus for distributing, generating,  
and redeeming discount Virtual Coupons™, rebate or gift  
certificates or the like which may be used on conjunction  
with a frequency card program or the like. Virtual Coupons™  
may be distributed electronically, for example, in the form  
of a diskette or CD-ROM software. Software on the diskette  
or CD-ROM may prompt a consumer to call a 1-800 number for a  
validation number or code. During the phone call,  
10 telemarketing personnel may request consumer demographic and  
or identification information which may be entered into a  
centralized database. Once the software is validated, a  
consumer may print out a list selected Virtual Coupons™  
displayed on a Graphical User Interface (GUI). When a  
product is purchased, the UPC code of the product may be  
15 compared electronically with a list of Virtual Coupons™  
authorized for a particular consumer. An appropriate coupon  
discount may then be applied and the Virtual Coupon™ may be  
considered "redeemed". Once redeemed, consumer ID  
information and Virtual Coupon™ information may be retrieved  
20 electronically and used to update a central database.  
Accurate data may then be produced illustrating which  
consumers or groups of consumers are redeeming which Virtual  
Coupons™. Such data may be used for marketing purposes or  
to generated further diskettes for distribution targeting  
25 specific consumers or groups of consumers with specific  
classes of Virtual Coupon™ offerings. The use of Virtual  
Coupons™ eliminates or reduces fraud, and allows a frequency  
card discount to be applied only a limited number of times.